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1 DEC 1975

REVIEW STAFF

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Discussion with Mr. Gregg Rushford of
House Committee Staff on 26 November
1975

1. Mr. Rushford was interested in getting my views on the BACKFIRE controversy and whether I felt that intelligence judgments were being influenced in this case by political considerations, specifically SALT II negotiations.

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3. I told him that one feature of the great debate that I deplored was that both sides began to call in consultants to support their points of view. We wasted some time arguing about whose consultants were better.

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This did little to illuminate or resolve issues and probably served only to prolong the dispute.

4. In response to his queries, I told him that to my knowledge the debate was not influenced by any kind of political pressures to come out with a particular answer even though clearly one could say that one department would like to have seen one type of answer and another department a different answer. Such considerations did not enter into the CIA judgment. I did say that, since I was on the side favoring the longer ranger on the basis of what I thought was good engineering analysis, I felt the short range advocates were emphasizing wrongly some of the weaker data points. But neither side was forced by higher authority to come up with its particular conclusion.

5. He asked if I would be willing to talk to the HSC on the subject. I replied that I would but I didn't think I would be a particular good witness on the subject because of the age of my information and I would therefore doubt my usefulness on this subject. He asked who else was involved in the controversy that would make a good witness and asked specifically about [redacted]. I told him that I thought Ned had retired and therefore it was up to him whether he wanted to be involved or not. I also gave him [redacted] name as the Chairman of the Aircraft Working Group at the time of the dispute.

6. Rushford did not persist on the matter of my appearing to testify and I doubt that he will pursue the subject further.

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KARL H. WEBER
Director

Scientific Intelligence

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